THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) As on 1.1.1999, ONGC has acquired 2808 Ground Line Kilometer (GLK) of refraction/single fold 2D data, 29791 GLK of multifold 2D data, 1049 SSK and 3861 GLK of 3D seismic data and drilled 296 exploratory wells (including 10 structural wells) and 36 development wells in Cauvery Onland basin. In addition, off the Tamil Nadu coast, under Exploration Bidding Rounds contracts have been signed for 2 blocks viz. CY-OS-90/1 and CY-OS/2 falling in Cauvery Offshore. The Contracts are under operation.

The Government has offered 4 blocks in offshore Cauvery basin under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Additionally, 2 deepwater blocks, 1 in Cauvery basin offshore and 1 covering a part of Cauvery and Palar offshore basins have also been offered for exploration udner NELP.

The quantity of crude oil produced by ONGC from Cauvery basin during April 1998-January 1999 is 0.3064 Million Metric Tonnes.

As far as private/joint venture companies are concerned, the production of crude oil in Cauvery basin started in July 1997 from the exploration block CY-OS-90/1 (PY-3). The current rate of production from this field is about 1,000 tonnes per day.

(c) Does not arise.

Restructuring PSUs in Oil Sector

1030. SHRI RAGHAVJI:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a plan to restructure Public Sector Undertakings in the Oil Sector;

(b) whether P.M. while inaugrating Petroteck '99 recently in Delhi has announced restructuring of incentives to attract investment under New Exploration Licensing Policy, if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) what adequate precautionary measures to safeguard nation's interest are likely to be taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) The Government has constituted a Committee to look into the need of restructuring of some of the oil companies.

(b and (c) The incentives from time to time are being built into the phased dismantling of the administered price mechanism and tariff structure to attract investments consistent with the overall national priority and interests.

Increasing Oil Exploration

1031. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the acreage available under new exploration policy;

(b) how many parties internationally have shown interest under the new exploration policy; and

(c) how does Government plan to increase oil exploration during the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy, 48 exploration blocks measuring about 0.462 million sq. km. have been offered for bidding to both private sector and public sector companies on terms that provide a level playing field to investors.

The exploration blocks includes 10 onland, 26 shallow water offshore and 12 deep water offshore blocks.

The last date for submission of bids is 18th may, 1999.

(c) The New Exploration Licensing Policy which envisages increased competition among companies is a step towards increasing oil exploration.

In addition ONGC and OIL have a programme for the IXth Five year Plan which will bring about significant changes in physical inputs and approach.

Gas Linkage to PIPAVAV Power Project

1032. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Saurashtra Region of Gujarat, which is a backward region, is suffering from acute power shortage;

(b) whether is it also a fact that Government have made a commitment to allocate the gas to Pipavav Gas based Power Project to overcome the power shortage to this region;

(c) if so, the reasons for diverting the entire gas from Tapti fields to HBJ pipeline ignoring the claims for the Pipavav Gas based Power Project;

(d) whether the Central Government is considering to allocate gas for the project from other sources; and

(e) If so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) The supply and distribution of power to various regions in a State is the sole responsibility of the concerned State Government and the State Electricity Board. As against the Peak demand of 6629 MW during the period April 98-January, 99, the supply was 5623 MW, resulting in a shortage of 15.2%.

(b) to (e) It was decided in 1989 to allocate gas from the yet to be developed Mid & South Tapti Fields to a power project to be put up at Pipavav and take the gas from Gandhar Fields to the HBJ pipeline system. However, subsequently keeping in view the fact that the investment decisions to develop Mid & South Tapti fields were yet to be taken, it was agreed to allocate the Gandhar Gas for two gas based power projects of 600 MW each in Gandhar area and to take the gas from Mid & South Tapti Fields to meet the existing commitments along the HBJ pipeline system. The Government of Gujarat have been advised accordingly.

New LPG Agencies in Assam

1033. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of new LPG agencies allotted in the State of Assam during 1997-98;

(b) what is the target fixed for allotment of new agencies in this State during 1998-99; and

(c) the details of norms and guidelines laid down by Government for such allotment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) In addition to the locations pending from previous Marketing Plans 69 locations have been included in the marketing plan 1996—98 for setting up LPG distributorships in Assam. It generally takes 6—12 months for commissioning of the distributorship from the date of interview.

(c) As per existing policy for allotment of dealerships/distrubutorships, locations included in the approved marketing plans are advertised by the Oil Companies inviting applications from persons meeting the eligibility criteria relating to nationality, age, educational